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ABSTRACT

This document consists of 11 brochures developed for the Right to Read program in Tennessee. Each brochure addresses a different topic. "Introduction" discusses the program's objectives and an effective developmental reading program; "A Positive Approach" looks at why many students fail to become efficient readers and discusses the development of a positive and balanced reading program; "What Is Reading" discusses the reading process; "Language Development: The Foundation for Success in Reading" provides suggestions for a language development program; "A Successful Beginning for Every Child" presents questions and answers related to problem readers; "The First Component of a Developmental Reading Program" discusses direct instruction in building skills; "The Second Component of a Developmental Reading Program" presents steps in planning for personal reading for pleasure; "The Third Component of a Developmental Reading Program" discusses the application of reading and study skills in the content areas; "The Fourth Component of a Developmental Reading Program" looks at research skills; "Reading Tests--Dangers and Limitations" discusses the limitations of standardized tests; and "Phonics--Some Questions" looks at the use of phonics in reading instruction. (WR)

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"Begin in Delight--End in Wisdom"

AS 001 356

Introduction
1. A Positive Approach
2. What is Reading?
3. Language Development:
   The Foundation for Success in Reading
4. A Successful Beginning for Every Child
5. The First Component of a Developmental
   Reading Program

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The Right to Read

The National Goal

The United States Office of Education has adopted as a national goal that by the end of the 1970's the right to read shall be a reality for all. . . that no one shall be leaving our schools without the skill and desire necessary to read to the full limits of his ability.

Tennessee's Goal

The goal for the State of Tennessee is to make it possible for every student to become, to the full limit of his ability, an articulate speaker, a competent writer, and an efficient reader in his personal, social, and occupational life.

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Tennessee's Objectives

To provide every child with a successful beginning in reading

To promote an effective developmental reading program for every student

To foster a continuing enthusiasm for reading among all students

To provide for realistic expectations of student achievement and avoid labeling students as "remedial readers" or "failures" because of arbitrarily set standards of achievement

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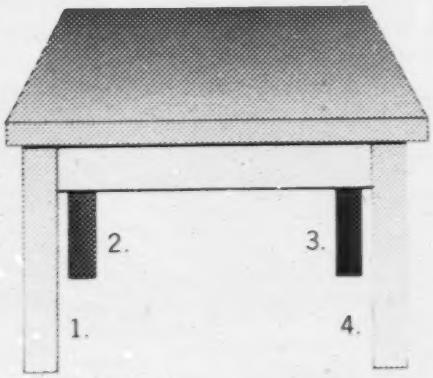
An Effective Developmental Reading Program

A good reading program which will provide for the maximum development of students has four components. In other words, like a table, an adequately balanced developmental reading program should stand upon four legs. The four legs or components are:

1. Direct Instruction in Skills
2. Personal Reading for Pleasure and Information
3. Application of Reading and Study Skills in the Content Areas
4. Research Skills (Independent Learning Skills)



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Action Program for 1973

I. Establish an understanding of the rationale for effective developmental reading programs through:

- **A.** The publication of brochures and bulletins
- **B.** Production of pictures, slides, filmstrips, films, video tapes, displays, and exhibits
- **C.** Regional conferences
- **D.** A cooperative study program with the Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers
- **E.** Programs for educational and civic organizations
- **F.** Inservice programs

II. Recognize successful classroom practices in teaching reading by:

- **A.** The identification of promising and effective practices, strategies, and techniques actually being used by classroom teachers
- **B.** The provision for the sharing of ideas among teachers at all levels both within a school system and among school systems

III. Assist with the planning and implementation of developmental reading programs in selected schools

IV. Cooperate with teacher training institutions in the development of preservice and in-service programs for promoting the concept and the possible methods, techniques, and activities of good developmental reading programs

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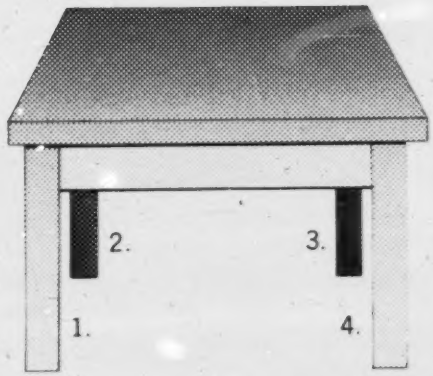
A Balanced Developmental Reading Program for Every Student



1. Direct Instruction in Skills
2. Personal Reading for Pleasure
3. Application of Reading and Study Skills in Content Areas
4. Research Skills

In actual teaching, these four parts of the reading program are not separate but often overlap and support one another. But in planning teaching strategies, it is helpful to identify these four components and to design a systematic program for each part. Teachers must not, however, make the mistake of considering such plans as pre-established goals which all children can reach at the same time.

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A Positive Approach

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Should Efforts be Made to Modify the "Disease Notion" or "Sick Approach" to Reading Instruction?

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During the last few years teachers have made a determined effort to improve the teaching of reading, and many schools and school systems have spent large sums of money on reading materials and on special reading programs. The quality of reading programs, nevertheless, continues to be a matter of real concern. Rising standards and greater expectations may account in part for the widespread concern. Finding ways to enable every student to achieve the highest level of literacy of which he is mentally capable has become a matter of highest priority.

Yet many students continue to be incompetent readers. Efforts to help such students have led to an emphasis upon diagnosis, prescription, and treatment. These words with their medical connotations have perhaps contributed to the present negative or "sick" approach to the teaching of reading. Sometimes remedial programs have consisted of administering several standardized tests, rather than one, followed by massive doses of drill on phonic rules, on word recognition activities, and on comprehension exercises with the limited goal of training students to make higher test scores.

Is it surprising that these programs have not been entirely successful? Reading authorities and psycholinguists are reminding us that it strains logic to accept the simple disease notion that is currently popular in education, medical, and psychological circles. For instance, Balow concluded after extensive investigations:

> ***Obviously some few cases (approximately two percent)—arise from an unusual neurological switchboard, scrambled circuitry, crossed wires or blown fuses, but the large mass of learning disabled are far more likely to derive from an innate or acquired vulnerability coupled with an environment in home and school—that is inhospitable or downright hostile to learning in the basic skills. The operative agent is the educational environment, not the vulnerability.***[1]

Goodman maintains that too much time has been spent trying to find weaknesses and deficiencies in children which might explain their lack of success in learning to read. "A flexible, relevant reading curriculum would capitalize on the strengths of children of both sexes, and of all shapes, sizes, colors, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, dispositions, energy levels, and physical attributes."[2]

Major emphasis, it appears, should be placed upon promoting positive and balanced reading programs for the ninety-eight percent of the children who need and can profit from such programs.

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[1]Bruce Balow, "Perceptual-Motor Activities in the Treatment of Severe Reading Disability," *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (March, 1971), p. 518.

[2]Kenneth S. Goodman and Olive S. Niles, *Reading Process and Program* (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1970), p. 28.

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Why Do Many Students Fail to Become Efficient Readers?

I. *We make many children "reading problems" by instruction of beginners without sufficient regard to their maturity and background for learning to work with printed symbols; therefore, we force many beginners into activities which can result only in failure and frustration.*

II. *We have unrealistic expectations about what students should be able to do. Believing that because students have been subjected to instruction in reading for a certain length of time, they should reach some arbitrarily set standard of achievement is fallacious and results, frequently, in falsely labeling many children as "failures."*

III. *We do not have adequately balanced reading programs in all schools. An adequately balanced reading program which will provide for the maximum development of students consists of four parts:*

- A. *The Component of Direct Instruction in Skills*
- B. *The Component of Personal Reading for Pleasure and Information*
- C. *The Application of Reading and Study Skills in the Content Areas*
- D. *The Component of Research Skills (Independent Learning Skills)*

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Certainly, reading clincs should be available to provide services for truly disabled readers who need clinical treatment, not simply better instruction. Such a clinic, however, should be reserved for those children suffering serious mental, neurological, psychological, or physical handicaps which demand diagnosis and treatment by highly trained specialists. It should be on the professional level of clinics provided for physically crippled children.

Giving priority to positive developmental reading programs, based upon the strengths of students and not their weaknesses, should not be construed as a lack of concern for severely impaired readers. It is based upon the assumption that a positive approach to the teaching of reading is more sound, both psychologically and pedagogically, than the current "sick" approach. It should provide more productive programs for all students and prevent many children from becoming problem readers.

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What is Reading?

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Introduction

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What Is the Reading Process?

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Admittedly, the reading process is complex and "reading" is almost impossible to define. Yet an overly simplistic concept of the reading act can only lead to ineffective reading programs. An overemphasis on the mechanical aspects of reading and an over-reliance on drill are evidence of an inadequate understanding of the reading process.

Lyman Hunt found that reading is much more than word recognition, that word recognition is much more than word study, and that word study is much more than phonics. He insists that a balanced reading program must give consideration to the many complex aspects of the reading process; (1)

Ruth Strang concluded that reading involves physical factors, thinking, and feeling, but that thinking is always implicit in every aspect of reading (2)

Emmett Betts warned that the mere pronunciation of words, the memorization of phonic rules, and other emphases on rote memory and mechanics result in the empty use of words. "This false security in words leads to the acceptance of a carload of words without a single idea"; (3)

Kenneth Goodman considers reading a complex process by which a reader reconstructs, to some degree, a message encoded by a writer in graphic language; (4) and,

Jack Holmes defines reading as "an audiovisual verbal processing-skill of symbolic reasoning, sustained by the interfacilitation of an intricate hierarchy of sub-strata factors that have been mobilized as a psychological working system and pressed into service in accordance with the purposes of the reader." (5)

Consideration of the following sentence can be helpful in determining whether the quoted definitions are adequate statements concerning the reading process (An adequate definition must be both consistent with reality and useful in planning better reading instruction):

> ***Each photon carries 1 quantum of radiation energy, which is a unit equal to the product of the radiation frequency and Planck's constant. .***

An attempt to read the sentence will quickly place some of us in a class for "remedial readers." Even though we can say all the words correctly and even give a definition of each word, we still cannot truly read the sentence. Our poor reading, we find, is not due to an inability to pronounce the words. Some of us simply lack the experiences that will enable us to decode the message. The "cupboards" of our minds are bare or are inadequately equipped with the necessary information. We, therefore, cannot reconstruct the message encoded by the writer; in other words, we cannot read the sentence.

This condition of relevant experiences and knowledge as an integral part of the reading act is present not only at advanced stages but at every level of reading. For instance, consider what happens if a young child in some parts of Alaska tries to read "Bill saw a cow"; or, one in Tennessee, "Bill saw a yak." Even though each of them may pronounce every word correctly, neither of them can read his sentence. One has had no experience with cows (the other with yaks) that will provide him with the information necessary for decoding the message. Each child finds the reading difficult or impossible for exactly the same reason some of us do when confronted with the sentence about the photon. An essential part of the reading process is missing.

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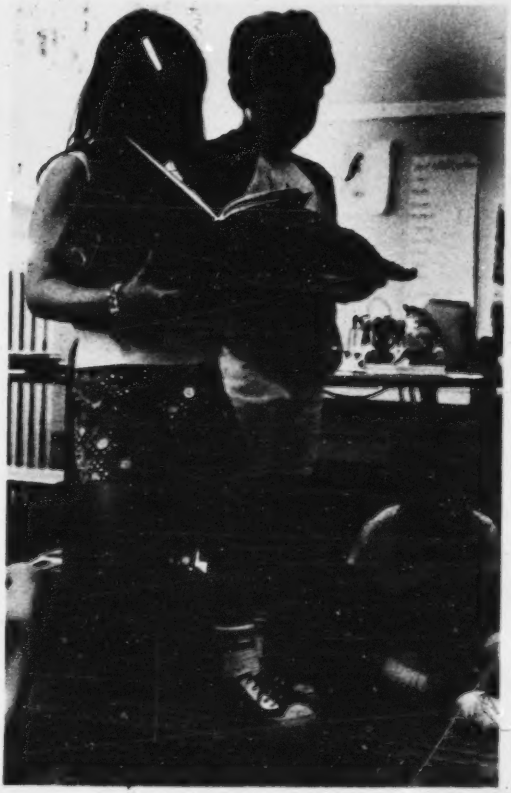
Studies of the reading process, as well as our own experiences, reveal that the greater the store of information, the easier the reading task becomes.(6) Instruction in reading by only one group of teachers, however skillful they may be, will, therefore, always be insufficient.

Students can become successful readers only when all teachers accept the responsibility for helping their students master the reading skills required in their subjects. Of even greater necessity, all teachers must assure the students in their classes opportunities for storing their minds with the



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experiences, information, and knowledge which are an indispensable part of the reading process. All too often when students have difficulty in reading history, science, literature, or any other subject, they are placed in reading classes where they are given intensive phonics instruction and extensive drill in comprehension exercises. Activities of this kind are frequently as unproductive for such students as they would be if they were used to help us understand the sentence on the photon.

All students, whether they read poorly or well, improve in reading by storing their minds with the additional experiences and information that make it possible for them to read in the true sense of the word. Reducing the reading process, at any level of instruction, to mere word calling or "practice reading" appears to be inconsistent with reality.

Developing a concept of the reading process useful in planning better reading instruction is difficult. A realistic definition can also be disturbing. It deprives us of a comforting reliance upon panaceas and an unexamined dependence upon any one kind of material, method, or organization.

Yet, accepting a falsely simple definition results in costly, even ineffective, reading programs. That some so-called remedial programs are excessively and unnecessarily expensive is unfortunate. That some of them actually intensify the difficulties which many students face in becoming proficient readers is indefensible. We can ill afford, when planning reading programs, to ignore the fact that development of reading competence is best achieved when the learner's focus is on the content of reading itself—when reading is done for a purpose other than merely learning to read better or, even worse, simply trying to make a higher score on some test or other.

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Reading, by definition, is always much more than word recognition. It demands that the reader recreate meaning for himself from the input he has obtained from the written symbols. Reading is never simply the identification of words, a mere "barking at print." It is always an interaction between thought and language. Reading is dependent at every level upon the reader's experiences, upon the information which he has stored in the "cupboards" of his mind. Thus, it becomes, because of the very nature of the reading process, the privilege and responsibility of every teacher, whatever he teaches, to help students develop into better readers, to help them become competent learners.

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5. Holmes, Jack A. and Singer, Harry. *Speed and Power of Reading in High School.* Cooperative Research Monograph No. 14, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Washington, D. C., 1966, p. 3.

6. *Ibid.,* p. 171.

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Language Development: The Foundation for Success in Reading

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Language Development

In programs for beginners, major emphasis should be placed upon a broad language development program. Competence in the use of oral language is the basis for successful reading. Programs for beginners must therefore consist of imaginative and creative uses of language in the classroom.

Removing from kindergarten and first grade teachers the pressures to have children attain mastery of certain skills and to reach some arbitrarily set standard of achievement should make it possible to develop programs that will provide stimulating language experiences for all children. Such programs are essential for those children who enter school lacking the maturity, the background of experiences, or the language competence to make learning to read the happy and successful experience it must be.

All children, as they learn to read, must make use of the language they speak. Each child must draw on his oral language competence to develop control over written language, to have a successful beginning in reading. Language development is therefore the foundation for success in reading.

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Suggestions for a Language Development Program

1. ***Plan the program carefully.*** It must not consist of careless, random, and academically unproductive procedures.

2. ***Encourage informal conversation and discussion.*** Provide opportunities for children to speak as often as possible. Talk with them about whatever is personally interesting to them and listen to them with care and concentration. To avoid retarding language growth, do not concentrate excessively on trying to change children's usage at this point.

3. ***Provide stimulating firsthand experiences and encourage children to talk about them.*** Language development demands a nourishing diet of experiences because speech is a complex process. Its maturation is circular and depends on a constant feedback of experiences. Pets and plants in the classroom, science experiments, art activities, and field trips are invaluable when children are encouraged to verbalize their experiences. We can speed language development by providing interesting subjects and experiences to talk about.

4. ***Use poetry.*** Every day read poetry and encourage children to recite poems.

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5. *Use music.* Have singing games. Let children sing and participate in all kinds of rhythmic activities.

6. *Read stories and books to children for the sheer pleasure of it.* Remember that to establish lifetime reading habits nothing is more effective than the teacher's contagious enthusiasm and obvious love of reading. Children need constant and happy association with books every day from the first day they enter school until the day they graduate.

7. *Make writing an important part of each day.* As children talk and tell their experiences, write their stories for them or enlist the help of older students or parents to act as secretaries for the children until they can write themselves. Display these stories, reread them, bind them into books—find ways to give them the importance they deserve.

8. *Set up centers where children can play.* Playacting develops children's imagination, clarifies concepts, and helps them express feelings.

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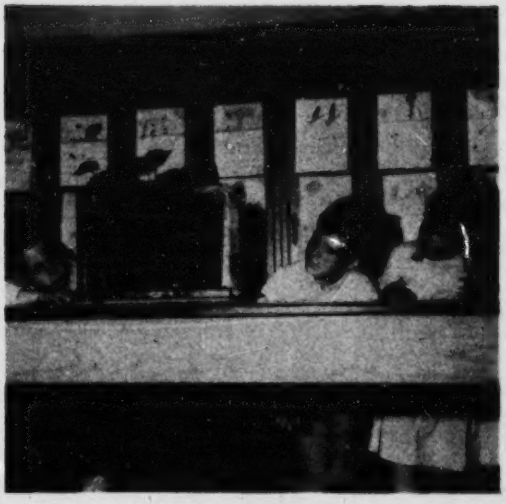
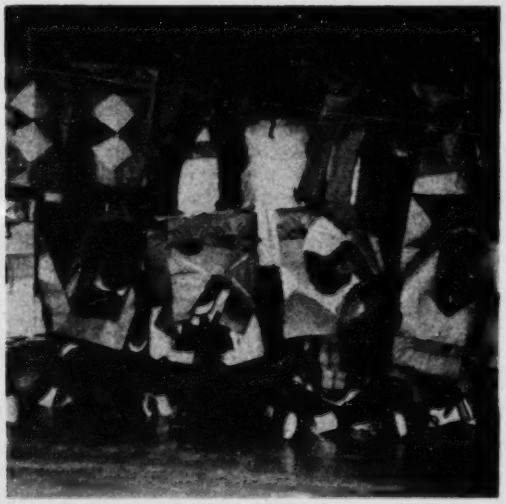
9. ***Encourage creative dramatics and role playing.*** Use many kinds of puppets and provide for all kinds of "make-believe" or playacting experiences.

10. ***Have fun with words.*** Dramatize words such as jump, run, laugh, cry. Post intriguing notices for children to read such as "Surprise! Surprise! On Wednesday afternoon!"

The list of suggestions could be extended indefinitely. The activities listed above are not new to classrooms for beginners. The emphasis placed upon them and the deliberate and carefully planned use of such experiences to develop competence in the use of language ***as the major focus in the instruction of beginners*** may be new.





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A Successful Beginning for Every Child

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How Do We Make Problem Readers?

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Question: Are we making problem readers?

Answer: Let me tell you about Jim. Last August, Jim had his sixth birthday and entered school with great eagerness the first of september. Late one afternoon near the end of January, only five short months later, this scene took place.

Father: Hello, Jim, how did things to today?

Jim: Today Miss Jane told us that we'd better start working harder and finish this book we're in 'cause there's another book after this one we've got to finish or we won't pass. And you know we're the slowest reading group and you know we can't ever finish this book and another one too. So, Daddy, I thought I ought to talk to you because it's all over now.

The scene, recounted here, actually took place. Unfortunately, Jim was right because for him and many other children, within a few months after they enter school, it is (in Jim's words) ***all over now.*** Their eagerness to learn, their pleasure in books, and their confidence in themselves as learners have been destroyed.

Question: Why does this happen?

Answer: Most reading failure originates within the first few weeks or months of the beginner's life at school. Reading failure often results from instruction of beginners without sufficient regard to their maturity and background for learning to work with printed symbols.

Question: Does this mean that there is something wrong with beginners who have difficulty in learning to read?

Answer: Not necessarily. For many alert and intelligent children, the difficulty may be simply a matter of maturation. Children differ in their patterns of growth and are ready for certain tasks at different ages.

Question: Don't teachers know about the great differences found in all first grade classes?

Answer: Perhaps no other group is more aware of this range of maturity levels than first grade teachers are. No other group is more concerned about the damaging effects that failure and lack of success have upon children or more interested in providing appropriate learning activities for their students.

Question: Then, why do we continue year after year to force little children into situations where they can have no hope for success?

Answer: One reason that we continue to force little children into situations where they can have no hope for success is based in habit and tradition. We have expected children to begin learning to read when they enter school. Studies of child development and our own observations show that some children are ready to learn to read long before they are six, that many six-year- old children can quickly and successfully

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move into the usual formal readiness and reading programs, and that other children are not ready to read until they are seven or eight years of age. Yet we continue to make it imperative for all six-year-olds to learn to read or suffer disastrous consequences. A successful beginning in school is basic to the child's development of a positive self-concept and level of aspiration. Initial failure and frustration may color his total approach to learning tasks.

Consider what would happen if we passed a law saying that we must teach every eleven-month-old baby to walk. Then we could have classes with the accelerated walking group, the average group, and the slow group; we could even put their names on permanent records and give A's to our best group, C's to the average group, and F's to the poorest group. Think of the anxiety of parents and the pressures on teachers to find methods and materials to bring the slow group up to some mythical national norm. It is more than likely that various kinds of machines for strengthening and exercising the leg muscles would appear on the market. In fact, it is possibly safe to predict that in three to five years we could have a multi-million dollar remedial walking program to add to our present multi-million dollar remedial reading program.

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Question: Is it simply a matter of waiting until children are ready to read as we wait for them to be ready to walk?

Answer: No, it is more than that. Programs for beginners should be based upon two principles. The first principle is to remember that the primary objective of the reading program is to foster a continuing enthusiasm for reading. Learning to read is mastering skills, not learning a subject. In developing any skill the beginning or trying-out stage must be non-threatening. Children must not experience failure because they (adults too) learn and develop along lines they find pleasant and rewarding. Our expectations for each child must be realistic, flexible, and attainable.

Question: Would you say that the emotional development of the child is more important than his reaching any particular level of achievement in skills?

Answer: Plato said, "Education can accomplish its goal only if reason has an adequate emotional base." We must be constantly aware of the fact that the attidtudes toward reading that a child develops during the beginning stages are more important than learning the phonemic-graphemic correspondences or anything else.

Question: To what then should the teacher of beginners give first consideration?

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Answer: She should bear in mind that there is no such thing as uniform development in any area of human growth, either within the individual or among individuals. Therefore, no child should be permitted to engage in any learning activity that jeopardizes his emotional development. The second principle is that competence in the spoken language appears to be a base for competence in both reading and writing. Recent studies have revealed the relationship between reading failure and lack of adequate language experiences.

Question: Do you think it is possible for us to reduce the number of reading problems which we make year after year by inappropriate and premature instruction?

Answer: Yes, it is possible, but teachers of beginners cannot do it alone. They must have the understanding and support of parents, other teachers, and administrators. Only a concerted effort to design language development programs appropriate for all children will prevent countless children from being convinced after a few weeks or months in school that ***It Is All Over Now.***

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The First Component of a Developmental Reading Program

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The First Component of a Developmental Reading Program

A good reading program consists of four components. Like a table, a developmental reading program should stand upon four legs. The first leg is the ***Component of Direct Instruction in Skills.***

This part of the program is all too often considered the exclusive responsibility of elementary teachers. Yet, instruction in how to read must be given at every level. Becoming an efficient reader is a lifetime process; therefore, as long as students are in school, they need instruction in this highly complex skill.

Every teacher has a responsibility for this part of an effective reading program. For example, a first grade teacher may need to help students develop a left to right progression; a fifth grade teacher, to help students identify main ideas in a history selection; an eighth grade teacher, to help students understand the patterns of writing characteristic of science material, such as the cause and effect pattern; and the twelfth grade teacher, to direct students in the best techniques for reading a short story, a novel, or lyric poetry. All teachers at every level must be involved in this first component of a developmental reading program, ***Direct Instruction in Building Skills.***

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Guidelines for Planning the First Component Direct Instruction in Skills

1. Planning for direct instruction in building skills must involve every teacher from the primary level through the senior high school.

2. Large doses of drill, activities in the word recognition area, and comprehension exercises do not constitute an effective skill building program.

3. Teachers must have at their disposal a wide variety of materials and methods because of the normal and wide divergency of interests and achievement found in every group of students.

4. Too great an expenditure of money and effort in the search for panaceas and specialized approaches should be avoided. No one kind of material, regardless of the claims made for it, can be depended upon as a panacea.

5. Materials must be evaluated with great care because conclusions that have barely been suggested as possibilities or even opinions by research studies are being made absolute in instructional reading materials.

6. This one component—Direct Instruction in Skills—can never be considered a complete reading program

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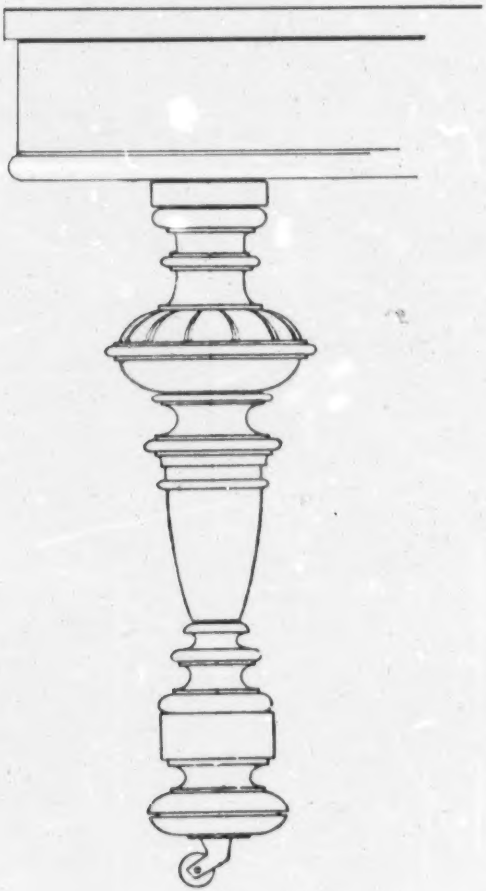

However much emphasis is placed upon this component—however much this one leg may be decorated and carved—it will not support a total program. It constitutes an essential part, but only one part, of an effective developmental reading program.

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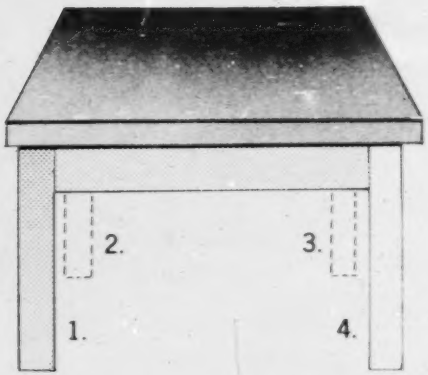
A Balanced Developmental Reading Program for Every Child



1. Direct Instruction in Skills
2. Personal Reading for Pleasure
3. Application of Reading and Study Skills in Content Areas
4. Research Skills

In actual teaching, these four parts of the reading program are not separate but often overlap and support one another. But in planning teaching strategies, it is helpful to identify these four components and to design a systematic program for each part. Teachers must not, however, make the mistake of considering such plans as pre-established goals which all children can reach at the same time.

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The Right To Read In Tennessee

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The Second Component of a Developmental Reading Program

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The Second Component of a Developmental Reading Program

A good reading program consists of four components. Like a table, a developmental reading program should stand upon four legs. The second leg is ***Personal Reading for Pleasure.***

An objective of Tennessee's Right to Read plan is to foster a continuing enthusiasm for reading. Our greatest failure may not be ineffectiveness in teaching students how to read; it appears to be neglect in providing opportunities for students to develop the desire to read and to form the habit of reading. Planning in our school programs for ***Reading for Pleasure*** is therefore essential.

Students should be encouraged to choose books that appeal to their individual interests and should be given a regularly scheduled time each day for personal reading. Nothing is more important than finding ways to make this reading period one of the truly good times in each student's day.

Making appropriate books readily available and reserving sufficient time in the daily schedule require careful planning and continuous effort. To make it possible for every student to form the life-time habit of turning to books for enjoyment, for information, for satisfaction, even for comfort, is a primary responsibility of every teacher. Extensive reading remains the surest path to true literacy.

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Steps in Planning for Personal Reading for Pleasu

Develop exciting ways for students to share their reading with one another. Conversation, discussion, informal dramatizations, and creative and enjoyable activities of many kinds should be a part of this sharing period. Formal book reports should be recognized as being frequently the least productive method for students to share their reading with one another.

Encourage students to write their own books. Having students become "authors" and "illustrators" of their own books and letting them read one another's books help them to develop an appreciation of books and a joy in reading.

Remember that the primary purpose of this daily free reading period is for pleasure. It is during this period that students can develop the desire to read and form the habit of reading.

Give to this component of the reading program the importance it deserves. It demands of teachers the same kind of study, preparation, planning, and emphasis which has usually been devoted to the reading period set aside for skill building.

Make books available. If students are to read extensively, they must be constantly surrounded with books.

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Set aside a part of each school day for personal reading for pleasure. The time for free personal reading must be preserved at all costs.

Find intriguing ways to interest students in books in every area of the curriculum. A major responsibility of all teachers, whatever they teach, is to advertise books constantly by their own enthusiasm for reading; through the use of the many recordings, filmstrips, and films that are now available; through displays of all kinds; through book talks; and especially by reading aloud to their students.

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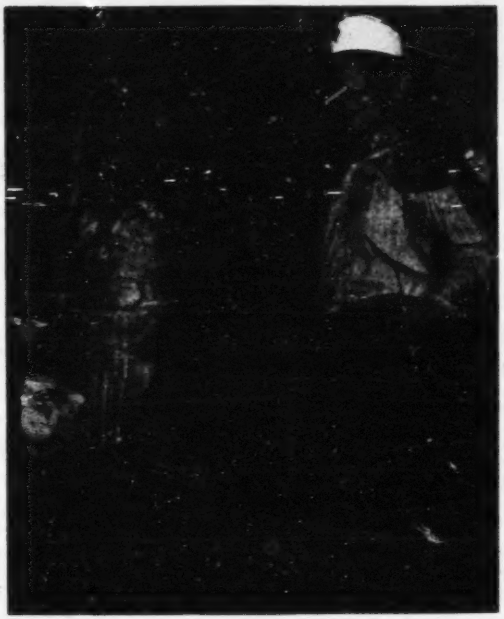

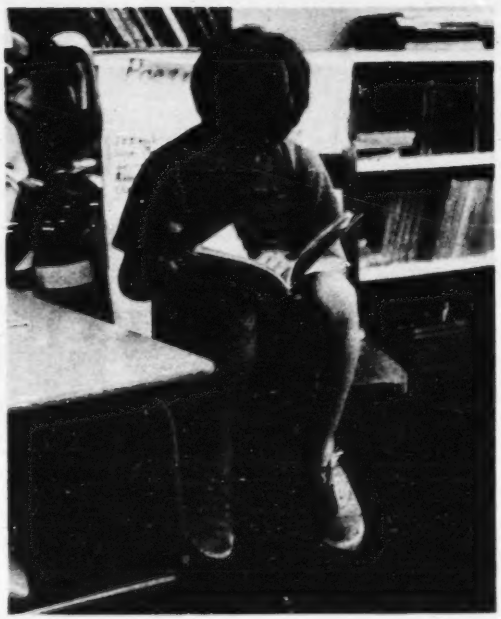

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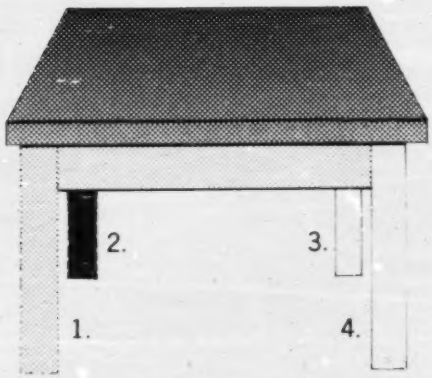
A Balanced Developmental Reading Program for Every Child



1. Direct Instruction in Skills
2. Personal Reading for Pleasure
3. Application of Reading and Study Skills in Content Areas
4. Research Skills

In actual teaching, these four parts of the reading program are not separate but often overlap and support one another. But in planning teaching strategies, it is helpful to identify these four components and to design a systematic program for each part. Teachers must not, however, make the mistake of considering such plans as pre-established goals which all children can reach at the same time.

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The Right To Read In Tennessee

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The Third Component of a Developmental Reading Program

TENNESSEE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
E. C. STIMBERT, COMMISSIONER 1972

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The Third Component of a Developmental Reading Program

A good reading program consists of four components. Like a table, a developmental reading program should stand upon four legs. The third leg is ***Application of Reading and Study Skills in the Content Areas.***

Every content teacher—whether he is a teacher of history, economics, literature, geography, mathematics, or science—has the obligation to help his students become better learners in his subject field. He must give his students not only well organized instruction in the use of reading and study skills in his subject but also sufficient practice ***in class*** to make use of these skills habitual.

Teachers in content areas do help students raise their reading competence when they direct them in procedures that help them master subject matter. Nevertheless, the teaching of reading is not their primary objective. Content teachers must remember, however, that helping students read and study in a subject is not adding teaching of reading to the teaching of the subject. It is the essence of good teaching.

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How Can a Content Teache Study Skills an Integral Par

A complete answer to this question would cover almost everything a good teacher does, but a few of the procedures used by successful teachers are:

1. ***Finding ways of helping students meet the problem of the heavy vocabulary load in each subject.*** There are endless ways to help students build vocabulary, but the vocabulary list is possibly the least effective or efficient method for many students.

2. ***Providing students with direct guidance in class in comprehending, organizing, summarizing, and reading content materials.***

3. ***Helping students learn to use a textbook effectively.*** We often teach students how to read words, sentences, paragraphs, and even chapters of a book. But rarely do we give them techniques for reading a book—rarely do we direct them in seeing the overall organizational pattern of a book. Yet the textbook is a readily available tool for such teaching.

4. ***Encouraging voluntary and supplementary reading and giving assignments which necessitate the use of many sources of information.*** Content teachers also have the obligation to supply students with a variety of reading materials on many levels of difficulty. They need a wide selection of appropriate books for student reading in every classroom.

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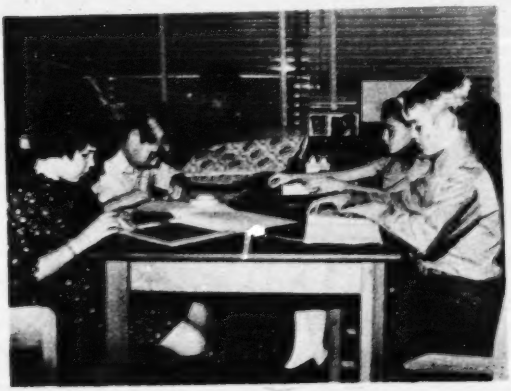
r Make Reading and t of His Instruction?

No school truly interested in developing competent students can leave to chance this vital area of instruction. It should plan with the greatest care for the application of reading and study skills in every content area.

Every teacher must cultivate and promote reading and study with a closely defined purpose. Such teaching requires instructional skills of the highest order, and only planning which involves the total staff of a school can assure teaching of this quality.



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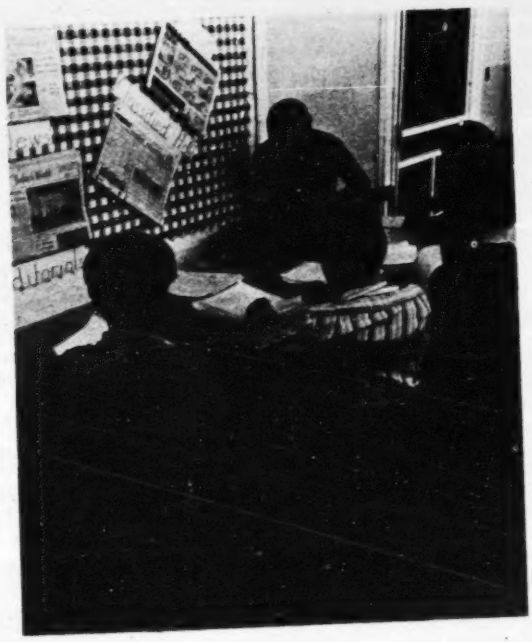

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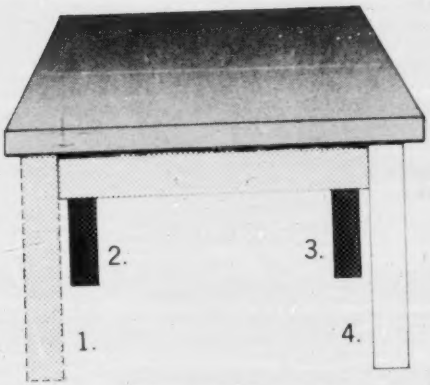
A Balanced Developmental Reading Program for Every Child



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In actual teaching, these four parts of the reading program are not separate but often overlap and support one another. But in planning teaching strategies, it is helpful to identify these four components and to design a systematic program for each part. Teachers must not, however, make the mistake of considering such plans as pre-established goals which all children can reach at the same time.

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The Fourth Component of a Developmental Reading Program

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The Fourth Component of a Developmental Reading Program

A good reading program consists of four components. Like a table, a developmental reading program should stand upon four legs. The fourth leg is the ***Component of Research Skills*** (Independent Learning Skills).

A major goal of education is to develop students with the disposition and skill to obtain knowledge on their own. Helping every student master the skills needed for independent study is a primary responsibility of all teachers. Too often, however, instruction in these skills is left to chance or to incidental teaching.

If students are to become self-reliant, independent learners, they must know how

(1) To locate and collect information (data)
(2) To record and organize data
(3) To present reports of their findings in interesting ways

Each of these three parts of the research process requires the mastery of a variety of skills. Effective teaching of the skills must, therefore, begin in the kindergarten and first grade and be continued at every level. Students can become capable, independent learners only when application of these skills is a part of all classes. Every school must have a systematic plan for making the fourth component of the reading program an integral part of instruction in all subject areas.

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A Plan Followed Successfully by One School

Level 1

Students learn that information can be secured from many sources.

For example, during a unit on "Sounds" the first grade invited the music teacher to demonstrate how sounds are made on different instruments, the pupils experimented with different ways to produce sounds, and the teacher gave a report to the class in which she showed pictures from an encyclopedia. These children were learning to secure information from many sources.

Level 2

Using the parts of a book such as the table of contents to help locate information and using the library as a valuable source of information are stressed.

At the beginning of a unit on "Our Helpers," for instance, a committee of second graders may be seen looking at the table of contents of books on their classroom shelves for stories and poems about "Our Helpers". Another committee may be found in the library checking out books, recordings, filmstrips, and folders of materials for their unit.

Level 3

The use of visual aids in books, such as charts, maps, tables, and pictures, as sources of information is taught. Students also become aware that information can be secured from many different kinds of books.

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Level 4

Learning to locate and use information on many topics is a major emphasis. A series of formal lessons on proper use of encyclopedias is given.

Level 5

Definite instruction is given in the use of the library. The card catalog and Dewey Decimal System are taught at this level.

Level 6

Emphasis is placed upon taking notes, outlining and organizing material, making a bibliography, and using a variety of reference materials.

Levels 7 and 8

Special attention is given to the use of current materials and the ***Readers Guide.***

The school also follows a systematic plan for teaching dictionary skills. The plan provides for developing an understanding of, and a familiarity with, many different kinds of dictionaries. Beginning with picture dictionaries, students move to those written especially for boys and girls, to special kinds of dictionaries such as the ***Biographical Dictionary*** and the ***Dictionary of Scientific Terms,*** and finally to a study in detail of the unabridged dictionary.

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The plan, although given in necessarily abbreviated form, shows that:

1. Research skills should receive direct instruction within the context of meaningful experiences.

2. Although direct instruction may frequently be given in the reading or English class, the application of the skills is made in every content area.

3. Proficiency with skills and understanding of content can be developed simultaneously.

4. Simply assigning research topics is not a program of instruction in independent learning skills.

5. Research skills are developed most efficiently when students engage in research activities for a purpose other than simply learning the skills.

Teaching of this kind advances not only the students' knowledge of subject matter, but it also provides for the mastery of skills which make it possible for students to learn other subject matter independently and at will. Such competence cannot be achieved through sporadic practice, through incidental instruction, or by isolated drill. It can be developed only through patient, persistent, and supervised practice done in situations meaningfully alive and of compelling interest to students.

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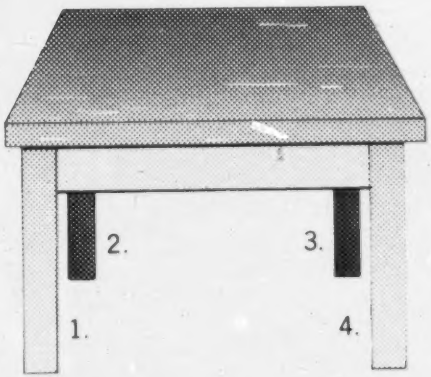
A Balanced Developmental Reading Program for Every Student



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Reading Tests Dangers and Limitations

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What Are the Dangers and Limitations of Standardized Testing?

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Reading is a complex skill. At the present time it is impossible to measure all its most significant aspects. Since reading must always involve thinking, such comprehensive or specific tests may never be developed.

The problem has been stated as follows:

> *Objective test-makers and test-givers, seduced by the belief that all knowledge is measurable and that the unmeasurable, because it is outside of knowledge, is non-existent, have, in the matter of reading, limited themselves to the measurement of something that is only incidental to reading and not always very important.*[1]

> *It is one thing—and a necessary one—to make a careful analysis of reading ability, to spell out its various supposed components in detail, to prepare extensive lists or charts of the specific skills or abilities to serve as statements of desirable goals or outcomes of the reading program. It is quite another thing to demonstrate that these manifold skills or abilities do, in fact, exist as differentiable characteristics of students; and still a third thing to build tests which are in truth measures of one or another of these skills, and not of some more general, pervasive reading ability.*[2]

Standardized or objective testing obviously can encourage a kind of superficial reading. An overemphasis on such testing may, therefore, result in poor instructional techniques. An over-reliance on the scores made by students on standardized tests may hinder teachers in recognizing the need of, and in providing for, the development of such educationally valuable abilities as critical thinking, judgment, and taste or appreciation in reading.

The indiscriminate use of test scores is educationally unsound, even naive, especially the use of scores on standardized group tests. Such tests are at best somewhat crude instruments for measuring achievement. Group reading tests were designed to supply normative data on groups—to obtain information on group performance. Such tests may present a true picture of group progress, but they were not designed to give precise measurement of individual achievement and progress.

[1] F. C. Osenburg, "Concerning Objective Reading Tests," *Improving Reading in Secondary Schools*, edited by Lawrence Hafner (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 225-226.

[2] Roger T. Lennon, "What Can Be Measured?", *Improving Reading in Secondary Schools*, p. 198.

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Trouble Spots in Testing

Spending excessive amounts of time and money on testing programs

Placing harmful pressures upon both teachers and students and increasing tensions in the teaching-learning process because of over-concern with the grade norm

Retarding growth and even blocking achievement of many students, especially beginners, through premature insistence upon a specific level of achievement

Focusing attention, by an overemphasis on test scores, on level of achievement rather than on growth and improvement

Causing psychological damage to some students by indiscriminately labeling them as "failures" or "remedial readers" largely on the basis of test scores

Making excessive claims for reading tests as diagnostic tools and as guides to prescriptive teaching

Using ***group*** tests to measure ***individual*** achievement and progress

Exploiting testing as a quick and easy method of evaluating the performance of teachers and students

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How Should Standardized Tests Be Used?

A realistic acceptance of the wide divergency found among students at every age can result in our making more positive—less destructive—uses of standardized testing programs. If we are to teach successfully, we must accept the fact that in every group of students the great variation in achievement is as normal as is the variation in physical size. It has been suggested that as a rule of thumb a teacher should take two-thirds of the average chronological age of the group she teaches to determine the expected number of achievement levels. For instance, teachers of six-year-olds can expect at least four levels; teachers of nine-year-olds, at least six; and teachers of fifteen-year-olds, at least ten levels. This should be considered a minimum number; the range will increase if students are taught well.

Standardized test scores are useful as one guide in the selection of appropriate reading materials for students. They can also provide some direction in planning for differentiated instruction of students having the wide range of reading levels normally found at every age in every classroom. Emphasis should be placed upon using tests as instructional tools. Their limitations for evaluation must be frankly recognized.

Standardized tests can be used as practical instruments of measurement only when their limitations are recognized and accepted. Personal, situational, and social factors influence test results. Moreover, these factors need to be considered when using and interpreting any evaluative procedure including observation, interview, and informal testing which must always supplement and support standardized testing.

Each student should be measured in terms of his own progress. Comparison of an individual's learning against a standardized norm or that of a class group can often be an undesirable, even harmful, educational practice.

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Phonics Some Questions

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Questions Concerning Phonics

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No question is more beset by emotion than one concerned with phonics, either the particular kind or amount, to be included in reading instruction. In fact, a reasonable discussion of the place of phonics in the teaching of reading is often impossible. Certain questions, nevertheless, demand serious consideration.

Reading authorities, in the published proceedings of the Reading Reform Foundation Conference, state, "The solution of the reading crisis is as simple as ABC... The first question was what is phonics? It means decoding. It's as simple as that; and if you can't decode, you can't comprehend... Phonics create intelligence because it is the only ***reasonable*** way to begin to teach the reading of the alphabetic language."(1)

Other reading authorities and psycholinguists, however, are less certain about the value of phonic rules. They point out that phonic generalizations as presently stated are frequently useless, unsound linguistically, and irrelevant. They also express doubt concerning the value of learning rules, even sound ones, as a means of mastering the complex skill of reading. Their contention is that reading is a symbol system and the important thing to learn about a symbol system is how to manipulate it, not how to analyze it.(2)

Wardhaugh stresses that phonic instruction should not perpetuate linguistic and phonetic misinformation. The biggest problem, he finds, is the widespread confusion about the relationship of sound and symbol. He bemoans the fact that "letters are said to have sound, children are supposed to speak like talking books, and normative judgments abound." He concludes by stating that he can only speculate how much better a "scientific" phonics would be than the "pseudo-scientific" one we have at present.(3)

Certain investigations raise some questions concerning the usefulness of phonic rules:

> Of the forty-five generalizations or rules usually taught, Bailey could find only six to be of sufficient utility to merit inclusion in reading instruction.(4)

> In a previous study of the same forty-five generalizations, Clymer found only eighteen phonic generalizations to be useful in the primary grades.(5)

> Oaks' investigation indicated that the eight identified vowel principles were applicable in approximately 50 percent of the total vowel situations in a primary vocabulary.(6)

Some recent studies, particularly those in spelling, have made it possible to formulate sound rules concerning the actual phonemic-graphemic correspondences found in American-English words.(7) Yet, the learning of rules, even liguistically sound ones, still leaves certain questions unanswered.

1. How can we most effectively help students master phonic rules?

The transformational-generative theory of grammar makes us aware of the remarkable capacity of the human mind to acquire and produce language not only through imitation but through some not completely understood ability to analyze, catagorize, transform, and generate language.(8) This fact raises the question whether

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so much deductive (direct) teaching is desirable or necessary. In an environment rich with language experiences, is it possible that children could and would internalize and apply such rules (not verbalize) during their school years as they do in such an unbelievably competent way in their pre-school years?

2. Where can phonic generalizations be best taught, whether deductively or inductively?

Since reading is never mere word identification, it is questionable whether it is sound, at any level, to lead pupils to believe reading is largely a procedure for decoding and analyzing words. Since spelling is primarily a relatively mechanical activity based almost entirely upon phonological and morphological principles, would it be better to place instruction of phonic rules in the spelling class? Thus, many activities involving drill and practice could be disassociated from reading. Phonic rules could, however, be applied in reading when needed.

3. Should the differences in reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding) be reflected in instructional methods?

Efficient reading calls for quick recognition responses. Spelling demands the exact reproduction of every individual part of a word. A somewhat simple analogy might be that reading corresponds to the quick recognition of a friend or acquaintance (we may be unaware of the color of his eyes yet still recognize him) while spelling is more akin to portrait painting in which we must necessarily have an exact knowledge of every single feature. Goodman points out that the

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efficient reader is the one who has to use the fewest cues (sounding out of words, etc.) to get the message, the meaning.(9) Holmes found that the non-powerful group of readers used to a greater extent than the powerful group the phonetic word structure factor—poor readers were still in the stage of auditory-bound word analyzers.(10) Is it possible that an over-emphasis on word identification through the application of phonic rules impedes the development of the "quick-response" ability characteristic of good readers?

4. For how long should instruction in phonics be continued in the teaching of reading?

Jeanne Chall's definite recommendation on this question demands a careful assessment:

> *Once the pupil has learned to recognize in print the words he knows (because they are part of his speaking and listening vocabulary), any additional work on decoding [of words] is a sheer waste of time. It saddens me to report that some authors and publishers of reading materials are misrepresenting the evidence. They are developing decoding exercises for upper elementary and high school pupils, erroneously assuming that if this approach is good at the beginning, it is also good later on."(11)*

Large amounts of time, energy, and money are expended in reading programs to have students learn phonic generalizations. Such expenditures demand that questions concerning the place of phonics in reading instruction be given unemotional, serious consideration.

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